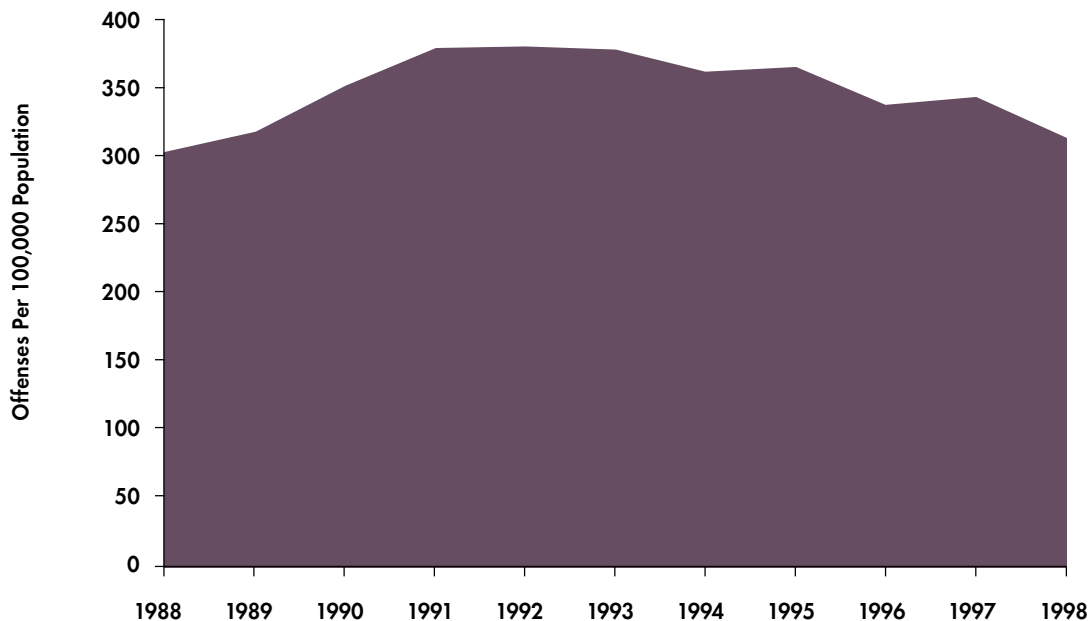


Display 3: Violent Crime Offense Rates (1988–1998)

Data Sources: *Crime in Virginia*, Uniform Crime Reporting Section, Virginia Department of State Police;
U.S. Bureau of Census and Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University of Virginia.

Display 3: Violent Crimes in Virginia

Violent crime is not the most frequent type of crime in the Commonwealth, but it is the one that receives the most attention from the public and policymakers. Although fewer in number than crimes involving property or drugs, violent crimes command a disproportionate amount of the criminal justice system's resources. Due to the seriousness of these crimes, they typically involve more investigative time and resources from law enforcement. Law provides the most severe penalties for these crimes, so the courts must allow ample time for a considered determination of the guilt or innocence of persons accused of these crimes. For persons convicted of some of these crimes, the Commonwealth may incarcerate them for life or impose the death penalty.

This display presents the rate of violent index crimes reported to law enforcement per 100,000 population for each year from 1988 through 1998. Violent crimes include murder/non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and

aggravated assault. Rates shown are based on Uniform Crime Reports data. Under UCR, murder is defined the willful (non-negligent) killing of one human being by another. Forcible rape is defined as the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Robbery is defined as the felonious and forcible taking of the property of another against his will by violence or by putting him in fear. Aggravated assault is defined as the unlawful attack by one person on another for the purpose of severe bodily injury, usually accompanied by the use of a weapon or other means to produce death or great bodily harm. Unless stated otherwise, violent crime rates throughout this report are based on these definitions.

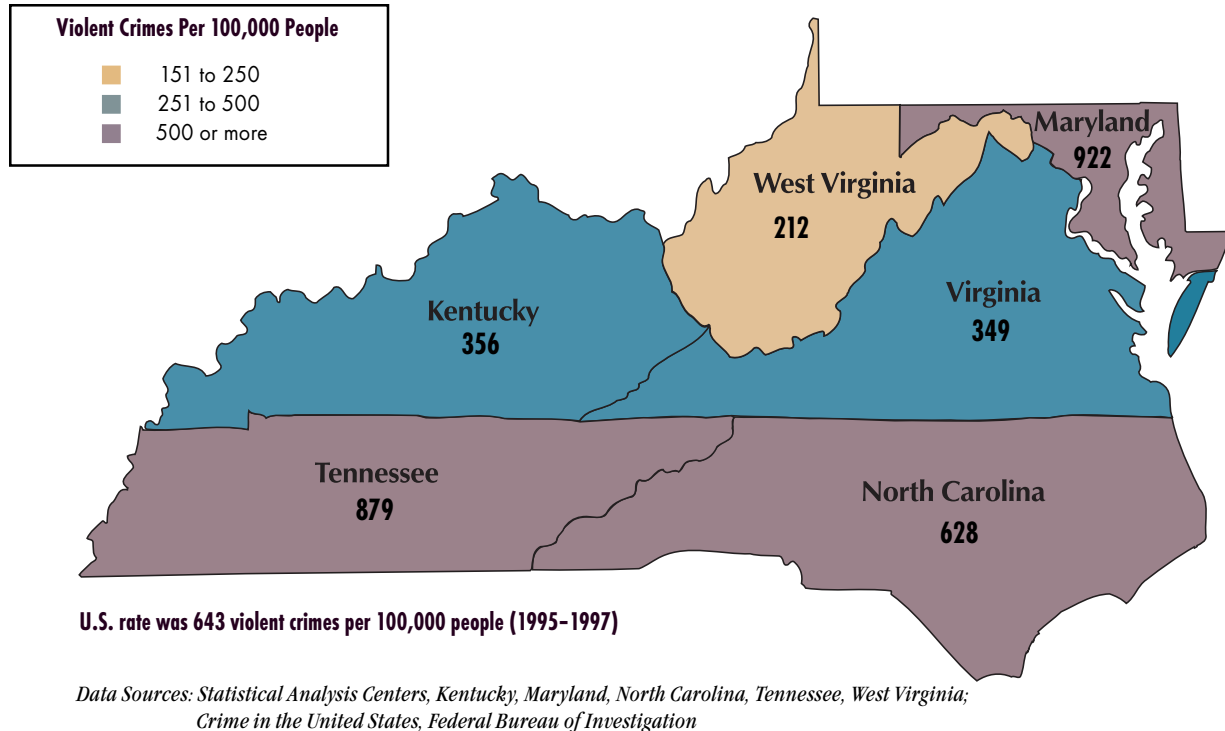
■ Violent crime rates steadily increased from 1988 through 1992, with the largest increases occurring in 1990 and 1991. These rates leveled off from 1991 to 1993 near their peak of 380 crimes per 100,000 population. The violent crime rate increased by 26% from 1988 to 1992.

■ After reaching its peak in 1992, violent crime generally declined through 1998. By 1998, the violent crime rate was 316 per 100,000 population, its lowest rate in 10 years. Between its peak in 1992 and 1998, the violent crime rate decreased by 17%.

■ Compared to less serious property crimes, violent crimes are relatively rare events. For example, during the peak violent crime year of 1992, there were about 24,000 violent crimes reported in the Commonwealth. By comparison, in the same year there were about 250,000 reported property crimes.

In 1998, Virginia's reported violent crime rate reached its lowest point of the last 10 years.

Display 4: Violent Crime Rates in Virginia, Border States and the U.S. (1995–1997)



Display 4: Violent Crime Rates in Virginia, Border States and the U.S.

Violent crime is a nationwide problem. To put Virginia's violent crime rates in perspective, this display compares Virginia rates to those of states that border Virginia and to the U.S. as a whole. Rates shown on the map above are based on three-year averages of the number of violent index crimes reported per 100,000 people in the years 1995 through 1997.

■ Virginia's violent crime rates compare quite favorably to rates for bordering states and the nation. Virginia's violent crime rate of 349 per 100,000 people was much lower than the national average of 643 per 100,000. Virginia's rate also was lower than four of the five states that border Virginia: Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina and Tennessee.

■ Several of the states bordering Virginia had much higher violent crime rates than Virginia. Maryland's rate of 922 per 100,000 was 164% above Virginia's rate, and Tennessee's rate of 879 per 100,000 was 152% above Virginia's rate. Rates for these two states also were much higher than the national rate

■ Of the states bordering Virginia, only West Virginia had a violent crime rate lower than Virginia's. West Virginia's rate of 212 per 100,000 was substantially lower than any of the states examined, and consistently ranks among the lowest of all states in the U.S.

■ Among Virginia and the five bordering states, four states (Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia) had violent crime rates lower than the national rate of 643 crimes per 100,000 people.

■ State crime rates are heavily influenced by crimes reported by highly populated urban areas within the state. Generally, urban areas tend to have higher violent crime rates than less populated areas. Maryland, with the highest rate among the states examined here, contains the Baltimore urban area as well as urbanized areas surrounding Washington, D.C. West Virginia, with the lowest crime rate, has no comparable large urban areas. Virginia has a varied mixture of rural, suburban and urban areas that contribute to its crime rates. Violent crime rates for different localities in Virginia are examined in Display 5.

Note: 1998 data were not used for calculating the three-year averages shown on the map because complete 1998 data were not available for all of the border states.

Virginia's 1995–1997 violent crime rate was lower than the national rate, and was lower than the violent crime rates for the surrounding states of Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina and Tennessee.

Displays 5 and 6: Violent Crimes in Virginia Localities

Display 4 portrayed Virginia's violent crime rate relative to other states and the U.S. Virginia policy makers also must be able to assess how violent crime rates compare across communities within Virginia. This information is needed for making decisions about where resources are allocated, where specific anti-crime initiatives may be appropriate, and generally which communities in the Commonwealth are having the most serious violent crime problems.

Displays 5A and 5B show average violent crime rates and ranks for each of Virginia's 95 counties and 41 independent cities for the periods 1988 to 1990 and 1996 to 1998. Crime rates are grouped in five levels, based on the three-year average number of violent crimes reported per 100,000 people in each locality. Three-year average crime rates are used to provide a stable measure of crime in communities. This is critical when measuring crime rates for small localities in which a small change in the number of crimes from one year to another may produce large changes in crime rates. Numbers on the maps indicate each locality's total violent crime ranking relative to all other localities. For example, Richmond City, with a number 1 on the map in Display 5A, had the highest total violent crime rate during 1988–1990.

Display 6 presents detailed 1996–1998 average violent crime rate information for each locality. The total violent crime rate and rate for each type of violent crime are shown for each locality, as well as each locality's rank on these measures relative to all other localities in the Commonwealth.

■ A comparison of the maps in Displays 5A and 5B shows that generally the localities with the highest total violent crime rates in 1988–1990 also had the highest rates about 10 years later in 1996–1998. In 1988–1990, the five localities with the highest rates in Virginia were the cities of Richmond, Petersburg, Portsmouth, Norfolk and Martinsville. In 1996–1998, the five localities with the highest rates were the cities of Hopewell, Richmond, Petersburg, Portsmouth and Norfolk.

■ The 1996–1998 average crime rates presented tend to mask some significant decreases in urban violent crime rates within this three-year period. For example, between 1996 and 1998, Hopewell's violent crime rate declined by 44%, Richmond's declined by 17% and Petersburg's declined by 19%.

■ Although Virginia's cities tended to have the highest total violent crime rates, some rural areas had high rates as well. For example, in 1996–1998, Sussex, Mecklenburg and Tazewell counties ranked 15, 16 and 18, respectively, among Virginia localities. These ranks are much higher than those for other surrounding counties in these rural areas.

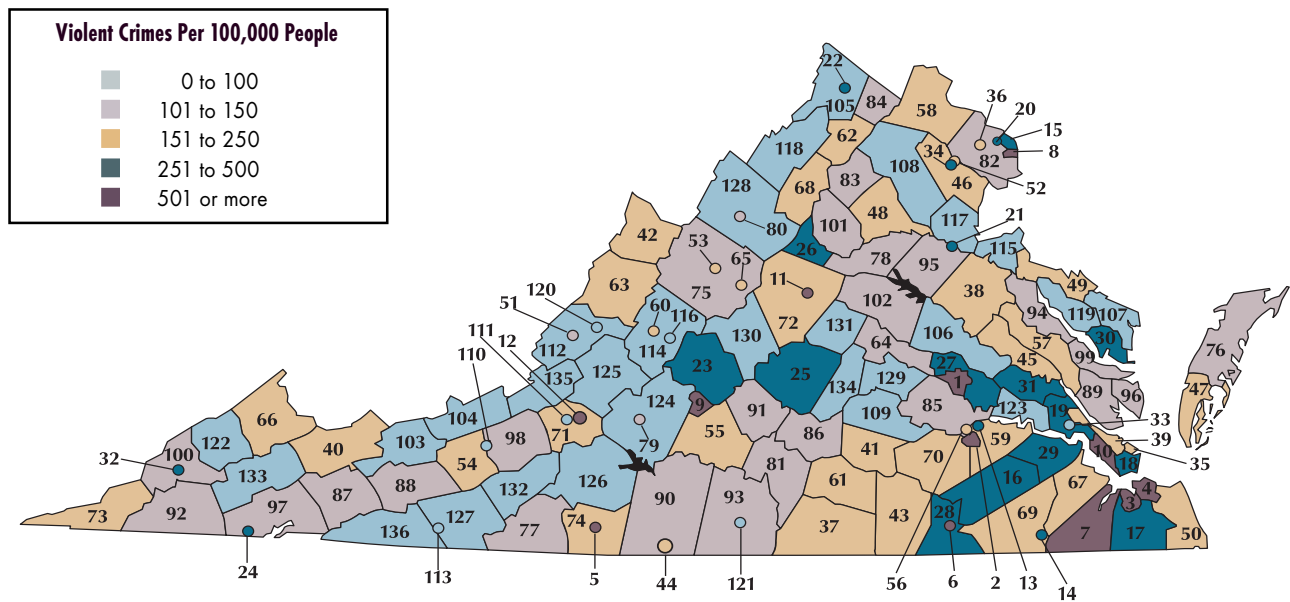
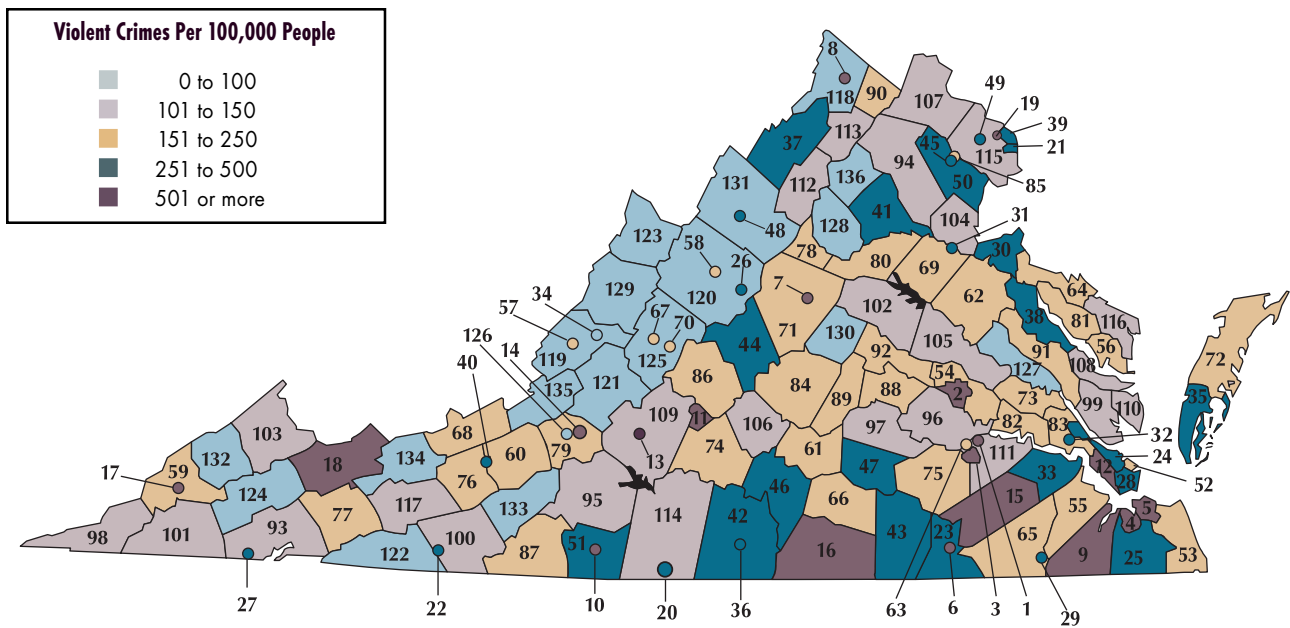
■ Generally, rural counties in western Virginia had the lowest total violent crime rates. Rural counties in Virginia's Central, Southside and Northern Neck regions also had relatively low rates. In 1988–1990, the five localities with the lowest total violent crime rates in Virginia were Grayson, Craig, Cumberland, Russell and Floyd counties. In 1996–1998, the five localities with the lowest rates were Rappahannock, Craig, Bland, Floyd and Dickenson counties.

■ Display 6 illustrates that communities which rank high or low on their total violent crime rate may rank differently on specific types of violent crime in the community. For example, the city of Hopewell's total violent crime rate ranks number 1 in Virginia. However, Hopewell ranks only 41 on its murder/non-negligent manslaughter rate.

■ When comparing crime rates in different localities, it is important to note that crime rates may be affected by many factors. A locality's population-based crime rate may be somewhat inflated if the locality experiences large, temporary influxes of nonresidents such as tourists, commuters, students or military personnel. For example, Williamsburg's nonresident population increases daily due to an influx of commuters, students and tourists. Such influxes may bias crime rate calculations, as well as strain a locality's limited criminal justice resources.

■ Policy-makers use locality-specific violent crime rates to help guide the allocation of major anti-crime resources in the Commonwealth. For example, in 1998, Governor Gilmore requested and obtained a 148% increase in state funding aid for local law enforcement through the "599" funding program. Under this program, funding levels for individual localities are computed using several locality factors, with the most important factor being each locality's total violent crime rate.

Localities that had the Commonwealth's highest violent crime rates a decade ago are generally the same localities that continued to have the highest violent crime rates in the late 1990s. However, most of these localities have seen significant drops in their violent crime rates during the last three years.

Display 5A: Violent Crime Rates Across Virginia (1988-1990)**Display 5B: Violent Crime Rates Across Virginia (1996-1998)**

— Display 6: Violent Crime Rates for Virginia Localities (1996–1998) —

	TOTAL VIOLENT CRIME		AGGRAVATED ASSAULT		MURDER/ NON-NEGLIGENT MANSLAUGHTER		RAPE		ROBBERY	
	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank
COUNTIES										
Accomack	191	72	108	90	5	56	27	44	51	41
Albemarle	192	71	150	60	0	121	20	64	21	72
Alleghany	89	119	79	108	0	122	10	114	0	132
Amelia	137	97	118	82	3	89	13	105	3	129
Amherst	171	86	123	79	3	88	15	89	30	59
Appomattox	125	106	92	102	5	59	18	80	10	106
Arlington	291	39	131	74	3	100	20	66	138	19
Augusta	83	120	51	123	4	68	17	84	10	109
Bath	61	129	41	128	7	37	0	134	14	92
Bedford	118	109	90	104	2	105	18	79	7	119
Bland	34	134	24	134	0	122	5	130	5	126
Botetourt	83	121	60	119	0	122	13	106	9	111
Brunswick	273	43	240	31	12	15	12	109	10	107
Buchanan	127	103	110	88	2	106	6	129	9	112
Buckingham	174	84	114	85	16	7	23	55	21	73
Campbell	191	74	131	73	5	65	29	39	26	65
Caroline	220	62	110	89	9	24	48	13	53	37
Carroll	133	100	99	97	4	82	15	90	15	89
Charles City	176	82	141	69	5	62	15	95	15	91
Charlotte	261	46	211	42	6	46	25	48	19	76
Chesterfield	138	96	54	121	3	84	18	78	62	34
Clarke	159	90	44	126	5	53	39	22	70	31
Craig	33	135	0	136	0	122	27	45	7	120
Culpeper	280	41	189	46	9	23	30	37	52	39
Cumberland	160	89	107	91	12	14	29	40	12	96
Dickenson	49	132	27	131	4	75	14	101	4	127
Dinwiddie	190	75	120	81	5	47	26	47	38	50
Essex	296	38	209	43	7	33	47	16	32	54
Fairfax	105	115	43	127	2	113	10	119	50	42
Fauquier	140	94	91	103	4	77	28	42	18	81
Floyd	36	133	26	133	3	101	8	126	0	132
Fluvanna	59	130	45	125	2	111	11	110	0	132
Franklin	139	95	106	93	4	66	10	116	18	82
Frederick	92	118	59	120	1	120	19	72	13	93
Giles	202	68	181	48	4	73	14	99	2	131
Gloucester	135	99	101	96	0	122	15	93	19	78
Goochland	158	92	135	72	4	76	10	120	10	108
Grayson	81	122	67	113	2	109	4	132	8	117
Greene	183	78	144	66	7	31	20	67	12	97

Rank is locality's offense rate relative to rates for all other Virginia localities in the table.

More than one locality may have the same crime rate due to rounding. However, each locality has a unique rank because ranks were calculated using exact rather than rounded crime rates.

— Display 6 (Cont.) Violent Crime Rates for Virginia Localities (1996–1998) —

	TOTAL VIOLENT CRIME		AGGRAVATED ASSAULT		MURDER/ NON-NEGLIGENT MANSLAUGHTER		RAPE		ROBBERY	
	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank
COUNTIES										
Greensville	475	23	401	17	6	42	18	81	50	43
Halifax	279	42	237	33	7	38	19	74	18	83
Hanover	125	105	87	106	3	102	11	111	25	66
Henrico	245	54	103	95	8	28	18	77	115	24
Henry	252	51	150	62	10	21	24	51	68	32
Highland	80	123	67	112	0	122	0	134	13	94
Isle of Wight	244	55	166	55	8	26	37	25	33	53
James City	175	83	96	99	4	78	34	31	42	48
King and Queen	158	91	122	80	5	57	10	117	20	74
King George	364	30	291	25	8	27	26	46	38	51
King William	69	127	47	124	3	98	3	133	16	88
Lancaster	243	56	195	45	3	93	15	94	30	60
Lee	137	98	115	84	7	36	7	128	8	116
Loudoun	124	107	88	105	1	119	10	115	24	68
Louisa	131	102	94	101	4	71	17	88	17	86
Lunenburg	210	66	153	57	5	50	24	52	27	63
Madison	64	128	40	129	0	122	19	73	5	122
Mathews	117	110	80	107	0	122	18	75	18	80
Mecklenburg	569	16	481	11	16	5	23	57	49	44
Middlesex	124	108	106	92	4	81	11	113	4	128
Montgomery	226	60	174	53	3	83	31	32	17	85
Nelson	269	44	242	30	2	104	19	69	5	125
New Kent	191	73	114	86	5	52	50	10	21	71
Northampton	353	35	223	39	16	8	39	24	75	29
Northumberland	104	116	70	110	0	122	17	83	17	84
Nottoway	258	47	208	44	9	25	31	35	11	103
Orange	178	80	144	65	1	116	22	60	11	104
Page	112	112	94	100	4	67	4	131	9	113
Patrick	165	87	131	75	7	32	15	96	13	95
Pittsylvania	108	114	75	109	5	55	12	108	16	87
Powhatan	162	88	135	71	6	39	10	121	11	102
Prince Edward	222	61	176	52	5	51	14	98	27	64
Prince George	112	111	64	116	3	87	17	87	28	62
Prince William	252	50	130	76	2	112	31	36	89	27
Pulaski	187	76	141	70	5	63	18	76	23	70
Rappahannock	24	136	14	135	0	122	9	123	0	132
Richmond	177	81	112	87	12	17	42	19	12	100
Roanoke	179	79	142	68	2	108	15	91	20	75
Rockbridge	75	125	54	122	2	114	14	102	5	124

Rank is locality's offense rate relative to rates for all other Virginia localities in the table.

More than one locality may have the same crime rate due to rounding. However, each locality has a unique rank because ranks were calculated using exact rather than rounded crime rates.

— Display 6 (Cont.) Violent Crime Rates for Virginia Localities (1996–1998) —

	TOTAL VIOLENT CRIME		AGGRAVATED ASSAULT		MURDER/ NON-NEGLIGENT MANSLAUGHTER		RAPE		ROBBERY	
	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank
COUNTIES										
Rockingham	50	131	27	132	3	99	15	92	5	123
Russell	77	124	63	117	1	117	11	112	2	130
Scott	133	101	98	98	1	115	27	43	6	121
Shenandoah	299	37	277	27	6	45	8	127	9	115
Smyth	185	77	146	63	7	34	20	63	11	101
Southampton	210	65	180	50	4	79	17	85	9	110
Spotsylvania	200	69	156	56	3	86	10	118	30	57
Stafford	126	104	67	111	3	97	24	54	32	55
Surry	359	33	281	26	5	54	21	61	52	38
Sussex	578	15	488	9	13	11	20	65	56	35
Tazewell	528	18	494	7	5	60	21	62	9	114
Warren	112	113	66	115	2	107	19	68	24	69
Washington	148	93	125	77	2	110	13	104	7	118
Westmoreland	216	64	143	67	10	20	31	33	31	56
Wise	234	59	186	47	4	69	31	34	12	98
Wythe	102	117	66	114	3	103	18	82	15	90
York	448	24	391	18	1	118	14	103	42	47
INDEPENDENT CITIES										
Alexandria	493	21	227	38	5	49	37	27	224	6
Bedford	588	13	487	10	16	6	48	12	37	52
Bristol	407	27	331	21	6	44	19	71	52	40
Buena Vista	199	70	152	58	0	122	37	28	10	105
Charlottesville	809	7	569	5	6	40	58	6	177	14
Chesapeake	431	25	232	34	5	61	23	56	172	15
Clifton Forge	353	34	323	22	0	122	0	134	30	58
Colonial Heights	219	63	62	118	8	29	14	100	135	20
Covington	242	57	180	49	0	122	14	97	47	45
Danville	497	20	215	41	15	10	59	5	208	10
Emporia	924	6	665	4	29	2	41	20	188	12
Fairfax	257	49	124	78	3	90	29	38	101	25
Falls Church	514	19	378	20	3	85	17	86	116	23
Franklin	400	29	231	35	12	17	19	70	138	18
Fredericksburg	363	31	217	40	3	91	24	50	118	21
Galax	478	22	385	19	10	22	39	23	44	46
Hampton	403	28	145	64	5	58	35	30	218	9
Harrisonburg	257	48	150	61	7	35	47	14	53	36
Hopewell	1740	1	1458	1	6	41	52	8	224	7
Lexington	206	67	178	51	0	122	9	124	19	79
Lynchburg	655	11	459	12	8	30	37	26	152	16

Rank is locality's offense rate relative to rates for all other Virginia localities in the table.

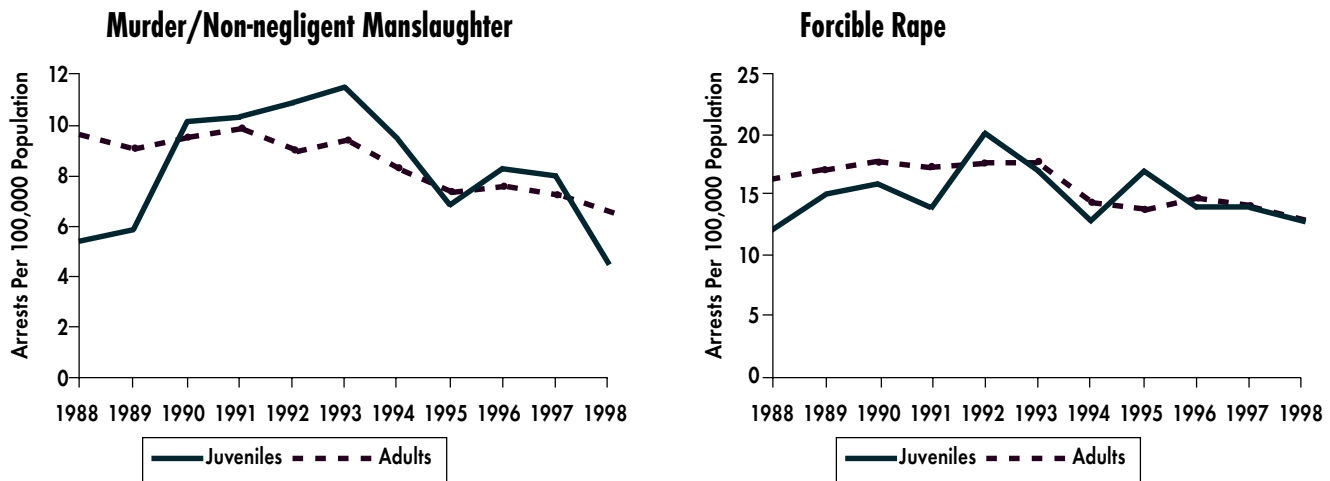
More than one locality may have the same crime rate due to rounding. However, each locality has a unique rank because ranks were calculated using exact rather than rounded crime rates.

Display 6 (Cont.) Violent Crime Rates for Virginia Localities (1996–1998)

	TOTAL VIOLENT CRIME		AGGRAVATED ASSAULT		MURDER/ NON-NEGLIGENT MANSLAUGHTER		RAPE		ROBBERY	
	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank
INDEPENDENT CITIES										
Manassas	264	45	151	59	3	92	40	21	71	30
Manassas Park	173	85	117	83	4	73	24	52	28	61
Martinsville	660	10	403	15	13	12	62	4	182	13
Newport News	600	12	312	23	11	19	55	7	222	8
Norfolk	927	5	402	16	22	3	64	3	439	4
Norton	540	17	492	8	0	122	48	11	0	132
Petersburg	1309	3	781	3	15	9	70	1	443	3
Poquoson	251	52	227	37	3	94	9	125	12	99
Portsmouth	1071	4	451	13	20	4	52	9	547	2
Radford	281	40	230	36	4	70	28	41	19	77
Richmond	1662	2	797	2	59	1	66	2	739	1
Roanoke	587	14	263	28	12	16	44	18	269	5
Salem	73	126	31	130	5	48	12	107	24	67
South Boston	347	36	238	32	5	64	10	122	95	26
Staunton	234	58	170	54	3	95	22	58	39	49
Suffolk	689	9	435	14	12	13	36	29	205	11
Virginia Beach	249	53	104	94	4	72	25	49	116	22
Waynesboro	415	26	299	24	4	80	47	17	66	33
Williamsburg	361	32	249	29	3	96	22	59	87	28
Winchester	725	8	531	6	6	43	47	15	141	17

Rank is locality's offense rate relative to rates for all other Virginia localities in the table.

More than one locality may have the same crime rate due to rounding. However, each locality has a unique rank because ranks were calculated using exact rather than rounded crime rates.

Display 7: Arrest Rates for Specific Violent Crimes—Adults & Juveniles (1988–1998)

Data Sources: *Crime in Virginia*, Uniform Crime Reporting Section, Virginia Department of State Police;
U.S. Bureau of Census and Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University of Virginia.

Display 7: Arrests for Specific Violent Crimes

Policies and programs to prevent or reduce violent crime cannot be effectively designed and implemented without understanding the different types of crimes that are committed and who is committing them. Efforts targeting one type of violent crime may be inappropriate for another type because the causes, circumstances and offenders involved in one type of violent crime may be totally different from those for other types.

This display presents 1988–1998 adult and juvenile arrest rate trends for: murder/non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Arrest rates are used to allow trends for adults and juveniles to be examined separately. Rates shown are based on numbers of adults and juveniles arrested per 100,000 adults and juveniles in the population.

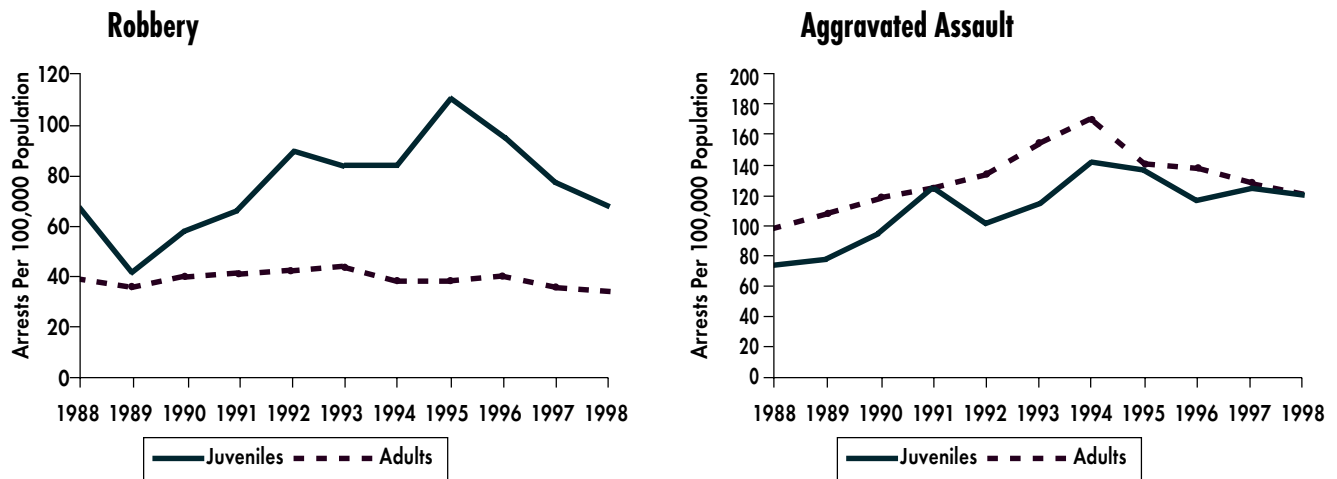
■ Arrest rates for both adults and juveniles varied greatly across the four types of violent crime examined, mainly due to the different frequencies at which these

offenses were committed. Murder, although the most serious of violent crimes, was also the rarest. Murder arrest rates for adults and juveniles ranged from about five to 12 per 100,000 population. By contrast, arrest rates for aggravated assault ranged from about 75 to as high as 170 per 100,000 population.

■ Murder/non-negligent manslaughter arrest trends for adults and juveniles were very different during this period. Arrest rates for adults declined in almost every year, from a peak in 1988 to their lowest level of the period in 1998. Overall, adult rates declined by about 30% from 1988 to 1998. Juvenile arrest rates, by contrast, started the decade below adult rates, but climbed sharply from 1988, and by 1990 they exceeded the adult rate. Juvenile rates remained at this high level for several years, then declined sharply beginning in 1994. By 1998, juvenile rates again dropped below adult rates and reached their lowest level of the period examined. Juvenile murder arrest rates decreased by 55% from their peak year in 1993 to their low point in 1998.

■ Arrest trends for forcible rape were somewhat similar to the trends for murder. Overall, adult rates declined by 19% from 1988 to 1998, with the biggest declines beginning in 1994. Juvenile arrest rates started the period below adult rates, but rose during the late 1980s and early 1990s and by 1992 exceeded the adult rate. Juvenile rates declined sharply in 1993, 1994 and 1996. By 1998, the juvenile rate was near its 1988 level and only slightly exceeded the adult rate.

■ Robbery was the only violent crime for which the juvenile arrest rate exceeded the adult rate in every year from 1988 to 1998. The adult rate remained fairly stable during this period, with an overall decrease of about nine percent. The juvenile robbery arrest rate dropped sharply in 1989, but then increased by 167% from 1989 to its peak in 1995. After 1995, the juvenile robbery arrest rate consistently decreased and by 1998 was near its 1988 level. Juvenile robbery arrest rates decreased by 38% from their peak in 1995 to their low point in 1998.

Display 7: Arrest Rates for Specific Violent Crimes—Adults & Juveniles (1988–1998)

Data sources: *Crime in Virginia*, Uniform Crime Reporting Section, Virginia Department of State Police;
U.S. Bureau of Census and Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University of Virginia.

■ Arrest trends for aggravated assault differed from trends for other crimes in that only this offense showed an overall increase in arrest rates for both adults and juveniles. Overall, adult rates increased by 24% and juvenile rates by 64% during this period. Adult rates consistently increased from 1988 to 1994, followed by a decrease from 1995 to 1998. Juvenile rates followed a similar pattern, although juvenile rates remained below adult rates in most years. The increase in aggravated assault arrests is significant because aggravated assault is the most frequently committed type of violent crime. In 1998, the number of adult and juvenile arrests for aggravated assault was greater than the number of arrests for murder/non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape and robbery combined.

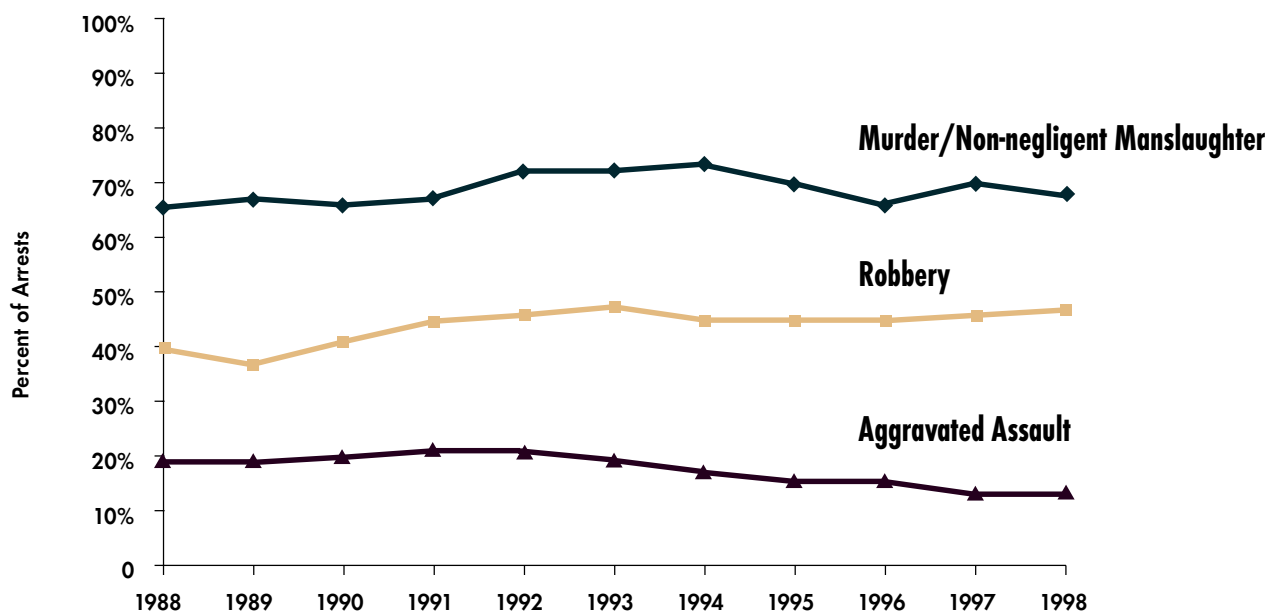
■ When comparing arrest rates for adults and juveniles, it is important to keep in mind the difference between arrest rates and actual numbers of arrests. Frequently, juveniles have an arrest rate higher than the adult rate, but the actual number of juveniles arrested for the crime is much lower

than the number of adults arrested. For example, the robbery graph shows that in 1998 juveniles had an arrest rate of about 70 per 100,000, whereas adults had a rate of only about 36 per 100,000. However, in 1998 the actual number of juveniles arrested for robbery was less than one-third the number of adults arrested.

■ Arrest rates vary across the four types of violent crimes displayed primarily because some types of crimes are committed more frequently than others. However, other factors also influence arrest rates. Numbers of arrests made by law enforcement are affected by the resources law enforcement has available, and by the priority law enforcement places on different types of crimes. Additionally, law enforcement is more likely to “clear” certain types of crimes by making an arrest than other types. Statewide, in 1998, law enforcement agencies cleared 84% of murders, 68% of forcible rapes, 36% of robberies and 70% of aggravated assaults.

Note: Adult arrest rates were computed using the number of persons age 18 and older in Virginia's population. Juvenile arrest rates were computed using the number of persons age 10 to 17 in Virginia's population. Under Virginia law, juveniles are defined as any persons under age 18 at the time of the offense. However, it is extremely rare for persons under age 10 to be arrested for crimes, so persons under age 10 are usually excluded from the population number when arrest rates are calculated. Additionally, Virginia law limits juveniles that can be committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice to those older than the age of 10.

Adult and juvenile arrest rates for all major types of violent crimes declined from their higher rates in the early and mid-1990s. However, in 1998, rates for some types of violent crimes remained above their 1988 levels.

Display 8A: Violent Crime Arrests Involving a Firearm (1988–1998)

Data Source: Crime in Virginia, Uniform Crime Reporting Section, Virginia Department of State Police.

Displays 8A and 8B: Firearms Use in Violent Crimes

Many violent crimes are committed using a weapon, and a firearm is frequently the weapon chosen by criminals. Virginia, like many other states, has made efforts to reduce the use of firearms in crime. Virginia's efforts take several approaches. Some, such as requiring instant background checks for firearms purchasers and limiting the number of handgun purchases in a given time period, are designed to keep criminals from legally purchasing firearms. Others, such as enhanced or mandatory criminal penalties, are intended to deter illegal firearms possession or use by increasing the consequences for firearms offenses.

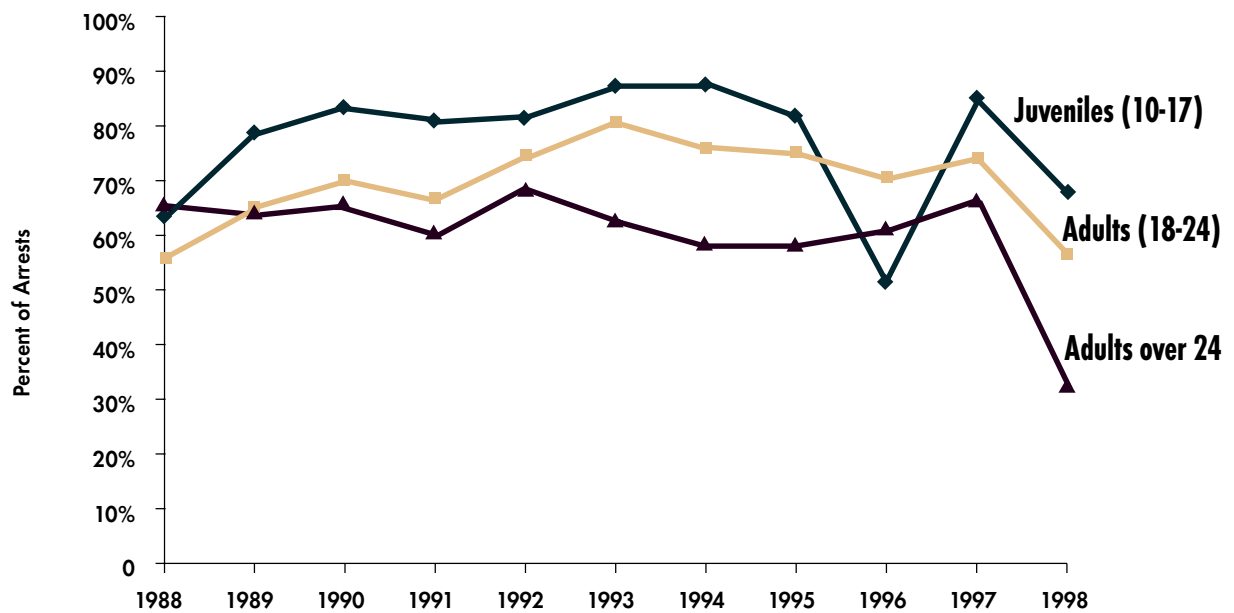
Display 8A indicates how often firearms were used in violent crimes by showing the percentage of 1988–1998 arrests for murder, robbery and aggravated assault in which a firearm was used during the crime. Display 8B provides a more detailed analysis of firearms use in murders by examining the use of firearms by offenders of different ages.

■ Firearms are used much more frequently in some types of violent crimes than in others. Murder/non-negligent manslaughter was the crime most frequently involving the use of a firearm. Two-thirds or more of the murders committed from 1988 to 1998 involved a firearm. By contrast, firearms were used in 37% to 48% of the robberies committed during this period, and in 14% to 21% of the aggravated assaults.

■ Overall, the percentage of murders committed using a firearm remained relatively stable from 1988 to 1998. During this period the frequency of firearms use in murders increased about five percent. Robberies, although less frequently involving a firearm, showed a greater increase in firearms use over the same period, rising by 20% from 1988 to 1998. Only aggravated assault showed a decrease in firearms use. Between 1988 and 1998, the percentage of aggravated assaults using a firearm decreased by more than 25%.

■ Unlike murder, firearms are not the most frequently used weapons in robberies and aggravated assaults. Whereas firearms were used in more than two-thirds of murders, they were used in less than one-half of all robberies and less than one-quarter of all aggravated assaults. More detailed examination of 1998 UCR weapons use arrest data showed, for example, that among aggravated assaults, “strong-arm tactics,” knives and other weapons were used more frequently than firearms.

■ Research suggests several possible reasons why firearms are more likely to be used in murders than in other types of violent crime. One reason is that a person intending to commit a murder may choose a firearm because it is generally the most lethal type of weapon available. It is also possible that the mere presence of a firearm during a crime increases the likelihood that the crime results in a murder. A crime that begins as a robbery or aggravated assault may escalate to murder because if

Display 8B: Juvenile, Young Adult and Older Adult Arrests for Firearms-Related Homicides (1988-1998)

Data Source: Crime in Virginia, Uniform Crime Reporting Section, Virginia Department of State Police.

a firearm is used to injure the crime victim, it is more likely to cause a fatal wound than a less lethal weapon such as a knife.

■ Closer examination of firearms use data also showed that violent offenders prefer certain types of firearms to others. For example, among murders committed during 1998, 83% of the firearms identified were handguns, whereas only 17% were long guns such as rifles or shotguns. A more detailed description of changing patterns in firearms use in violent crime is provided in the Research Center's 1994 report *Guns and Violent Crime*.

■ Display 8B examines firearms use in murder/non-negligent manslaughter in more detail by examining use by three offender age groups: juveniles (under age 18), young adults age 18 to 24 and adults over age 24. Data used for this examination were taken from Supplemental Homicide Reports (SHR) data from the State Police Uniform Crime Reports.

■ Younger murder offenders were more likely to use a firearm than older offenders.

In almost every year examined, the percentage of juveniles who committed a homicide with a firearm was greater than that for adults. Among adult offenders, young adults age 18 to 24 were more likely to use a firearm than adults older than age 24.

■ Overall, the percentage of juveniles using a firearm increased by about eight percent from 1988 to 1998. Juvenile firearms use showed an unusually large drop in the year 1996. This may be partially due to three incidents in Norfolk that year in which nine juveniles were arrested for homicides committed without the use of a firearm. The use of firearms by juveniles in homicides examined in more detail in the Research Center's 1996 report *Juvenile Murder in Virginia: A Study of Arrests and Convictions*.

■ The biggest change in firearms use during this period occurred among the older adult age group. The percentage of firearms-involved murders committed by adults over age 24 dropped by almost 50% from 1988 to 1998. Firearms use by 18 to

24 year-olds in 1998 was almost identical to its level in 1988.

■ Virginia policy makers are continuing to seek ways to reduce firearms use in crime. The Commonwealth recently initiated the Virginia Exile program, modeled after a federal program credited with helping to reduce the homicide rate in the city of Richmond. Virginia Exile targets persons convicted for possessing a firearm while a convicted felon, while possessing drugs with intent to sell, or while on school grounds with the intent to use or threaten with a firearm. Virginia Exile restricts bail eligibility, eliminates probation eligibility, and imposes a minimum, mandatory 5-year prison sentence which cannot be suspended in whole or in part.

Note: Firearms use data were not available for forcible rape crimes because these data are not collected in the Uniform Crime Reporting system.

— Display 9: Demographic Profile of Convicted Violent Felons by Current Conviction Offense (1995–1997) —

	Capital Murder [N* = 81]	Murder [N* = 683]	Voluntary Man- Slaughter [N* = 140]	Armed Robbery [N* = 1222]	Unarmed Robbery [N* = 1300]	Rape/ Forcible Sodomy [N* = 793]	Malicious Wounding [N* = 1415]	Total Violent Offenses [N* = 5634]
Age								
14-17	10%	8%	4%	12%	8%	2%	6%	7%
18-24	50	43	33	56	44	21	40	42
25-29	12	15	16	13	18	18	14	16
30-34	9	12	16	10	15	21	13	14
35-39	9	7	10	5	8	16	12	9
40+	10	14	21	4	6	21	15	11
Race								
White	36	34	31	17	24	51	33	30
Non-White	64	66	69	83	76	49	67	70
Gender								
Female	5	9	21	3	5	1	10	6
Male	95	91	79	97	95	99	90	94
Marital Status								
Married	10	13	14	7	9	23	13	12
Single	90	87	86	93	91	77	87	88
Education								
0-8	31	26	27	20	17	21	23	21
9-11	43	37	43	45	43	35	41	41
12	21	29	24	28	31	30	27	29
13+	5	9	7	7	9	14	9	9
Employment								
Full-time	28	35	36	22	31	60	40	36
Part-time	11	12	7	14	14	10	11	12
Unemployed	51	43	43	53	48	21	38	42
Other	10	11	14	10	7	9	11	10
Drug Abuse								
Yes	59	39	22	51	58	28	31	42
No	41	61	78	49	42	72	69	58
Alcohol Abuse								
Yes	46	38	31	32	39	34	39	36
No	54	63	69	68	61	66	61	64
Family Felony Convictions								
Yes	42	37	41	38	36	26	34	35
No	58	63	59	62	64	74	66	65
Mental Health Treatment								
Yes	46	34	33	27	28	37	32	31
No	54	66	67	73	72	63	68	69

Data Source: Pre/Post Sentence Investigation (PSI) database, Virginia Department of Corrections.

*N represents the number of cases. Total number of cases for each offense type may not be included for all demographic characteristics due to some cases with missing/unknown characteristic values.

Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Display 9: Demographic Profile of Virginia Violent Felons

Criminal justice policy makers and practitioners need information about the offenders who commit crimes to develop strategies for preventing crimes, and for apprehending, prosecuting, incarcerating and treating offenders. This display provides a demographic breakdown of offenders convicted of specific types of violent crimes. Data are extracted from the Department of Corrections' Pre- and Post-Sentence Investigation (PSI) database. The PSI contains detailed family, social, educational, employment and prior offense data on most offenders convicted for felony offenses. Data shown are based on three-year averages for offenders convicted in the years 1995–1997.

Because the PSI collects detailed information on offense types, the violent offense types presented in this and the following display are more specific than the offense types previously presented using UCR arrest data.

■ The majority of persons convicted for violent crimes were young. Overall, nearly 50% were under the age of 25, and 65% were under age 30. About seven percent of those convicted of violent crimes were juveniles under age 18.

■ The relatively small number of juveniles included in the display are offenders sentenced to the adult correctional system for particularly violent crimes. PSI data does not include the larger number of juveniles adjudicated for violent offenses and committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice.

■ The percentage of young people convicted varied depending on the type of crime. Although overall about 50% were under age 25, 60% of those convicted of capital murder and 68% of those convicted of armed robbery were under age 25. Those under 25 were least likely (37%) to be convicted for voluntary manslaughter.

■ The majority (70%) of persons convicted of violent crimes were non-white. Non-whites particularly predominated convictions for armed robbery (83%), unarmed robbery (76%) and capital murder (64%).

■ Only persons convicted for rape/forcible sodomy consisted of a majority (51%) of white offenders.

■ Male offenders were the overwhelming majority (94%) of persons convicted. Females made up ten percent or less of all convictions except those for voluntary manslaughter.

■ The level of formal education for convicted violent offenders was low. Overall, 62% had less than a 12th grade education. Those convicted of capital murder had the least amount of education (74% less than 12th grade), whereas those convicted of rape/forcible sodomy were the most educated (44% completed high school or greater).

■ High unemployment rates were a consistent characteristic of violent felons. Overall, 42% were unemployed. Offenders convicted for armed robbery had the highest rate of unemployment (53%). By contrast, 70% of those convicted of rape/forcible sodomy were either employed full or part-time.

■ Drug and alcohol abuse was prominent among violent offenders. Overall, 42% had apparent drug abuse and 36% had apparent alcohol abuse. Those convicted of capital murder had the highest rates of both drug and alcohol abuse.

■ Slightly more than one-third of convicted violent offenders had a family member with a previous felony conviction.

■ Although the demographic characteristics of violent offenders as a group are similar, there also were significant differences among them. For example, capital murderers were more likely to be younger, less educated and employed, and more likely to have drug and alcohol problems than violent offenders in general. Offenders convicted for rape/forcible sodomy were more likely to be older, married, educated and employed than violent offenders in general. These distinctions in offender profiles highlight the importance of designing policies that account for variations in types of offenders.

Note: Offenses included in Display 9 are defined in detail in Chapter 4 of Title 18.2 of the Code of Virginia. Generally, the Code of Virginia defines these offenses as follows:

Capital murder—the willful, deliberate, and premeditated killing of any person.

Murder—the unlawful killing of another person with malice aforethought.

Voluntary manslaughter—the unlawful killing of another person without malice.

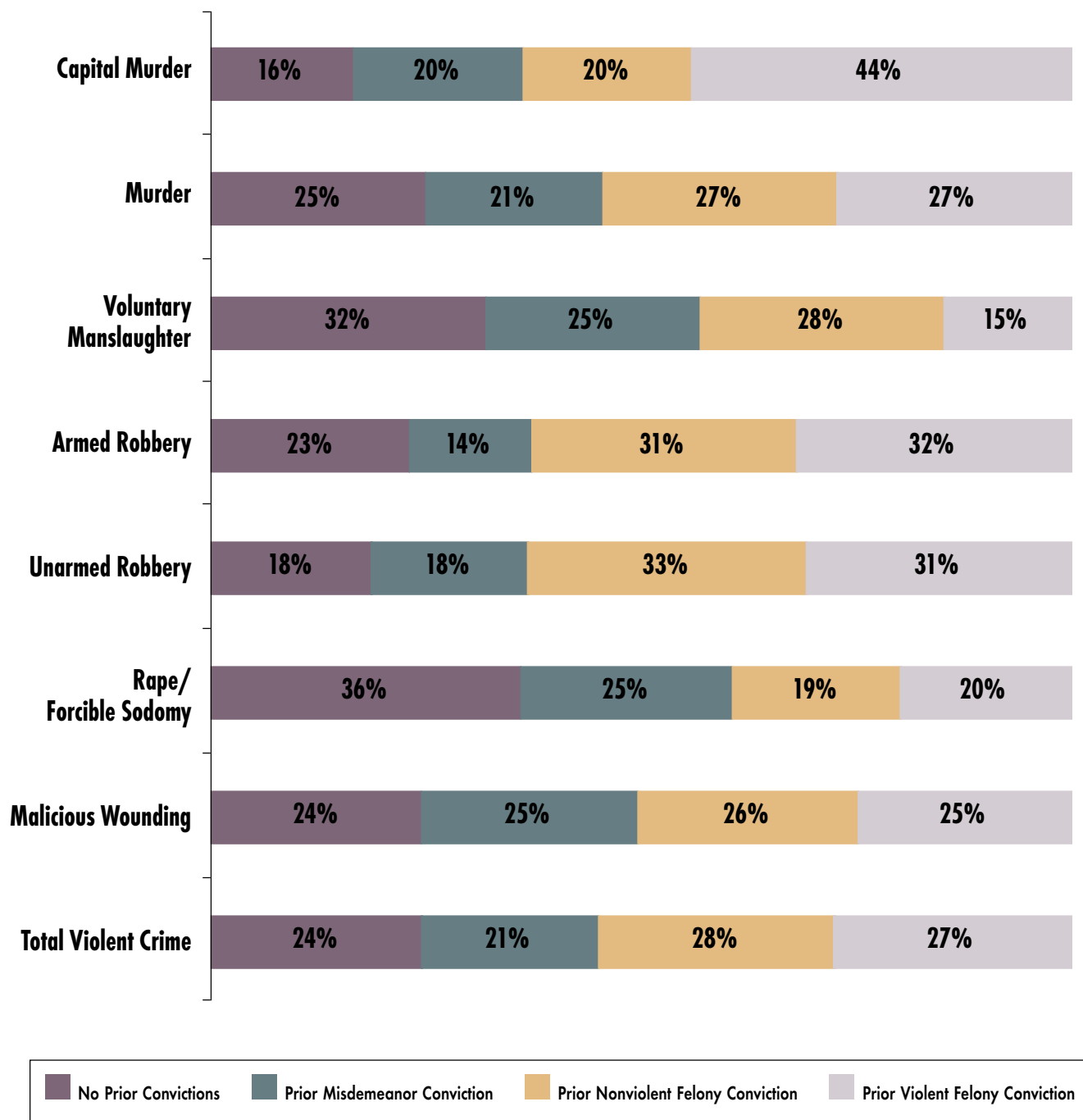
Armed robbery—taking property from a person using or displaying a firearm.

Unarmed robbery—taking personal property from another from his person or in his presence by violence or intimidation.

Rape—forced sexual intercourse with another person.

Forcible sodomy—forced cunnilingus, fellatio, anallismus, or anal intercourse with another person.

Malicious wounding—causing bodily injury to a person with the intent to maim, disfigure, disable or kill by malicious shooting, stabbing, cutting, wounding or other means.

Display 10: Prior Criminal Record Information for Convicted Violent Felons (1995–1997)

Prior violent convictions include prior juvenile and adult convictions for a violent offense.

Prior nonviolent convictions include prior juvenile and adult convictions for a non-violent offense (including drug offenses).

Percentages for each offender group may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Data Source: Pre/Post-Sentence Investigation database, Virginia Department of Corrections.

Display 10: Prior Criminal Record Information for Virginia Violent Felons

Criminological research has repeatedly demonstrated that one of the best predictors of future criminal activity is previous criminal behavior. Research has identified “career criminals” —a relatively small number of repeat offenders who are responsible for a disproportionate share of serious crimes. In response, Virginia and other states have enacted sentencing statutes that target these convicted repeat offenders for long periods of incarceration.

Efforts to identify and incarcerate repeat offenders must be guided by an in-depth understanding of the criminal histories of violent felons. Additionally, research on repeat offenders may provide information to aid in the early identification of potentially violent individuals. Using this information, future violent acts may be prevented through more directed treatment and rehabilitation of individuals before they graduate to serious repeated criminality.

This display presents prior criminal record information for offenders convicted of seven types of violent crime and for violent crime in general. Data are extracted from the Pre- and Post-Sentence Investigation (PSI) reports, and are based on the averages for felons convicted in Virginia from 1995 to 1997.

Prior record information is grouped into four categories of escalating seriousness: no prior record, record indicating a prior misdemeanor conviction, record indicating a prior nonviolent felony conviction, or record indicating a prior conviction for a violent felony offense. Each of these categories denotes the most serious offense appearing on the offenders’ prior records.

■ The vast majority of the felons convicted for every type of violent offense examined had a record of prior criminal convictions. Overall, more than three-quarters had an indication of a prior conviction.

■ More than one-half of convicted violent offenders had a prior conviction for a felony offense, and more than one-quarter had a prior conviction for a violent felony offense.

■ Offenders convicted for capital murder were more likely to have a prior criminal conviction than any other group of offenders. This group was much more likely to have a prior conviction for a violent felony offense than any other group.

■ Following offenders convicted of capital murder, both armed and unarmed robbers were most likely to have a conviction for a prior violent felony.

■ First offenses were most likely to occur among those convicted for rape/forcible sodomy. About 36% of these offenders had no prior convictions. Members of this group with prior records were more likely to have a prior misdemeanor conviction than other types of violent offenders. However, these previous misdemeanor offenses may include other sex-related crimes such as indecent exposure or peeping, which may occur early in the criminal histories of some persons later convicted of violent sexual offenses.

■ Every category of violent convicted felony offender also had a record of prior misdemeanor convictions. Prior misdemeanor convictions were most frequent among those convicted for voluntary manslaughter, rape/forcible sodomy, and malicious wounding

■ Virginia and some other states have enacted “3-strikes you’re out” type legislation to incarcerate repeat violent offenders. Under Virginia’s law, any person convicted of two or more separate violent offenses will, upon conviction of a third or subsequent violent offense, be sentenced to life imprisonment with no portion of the sentence suspended.

■ As will be seen in Display 28, the importance of maintaining accurate information on prior criminal offenses became critical in 1994 when Virginia abolished parole and adopted a “truth-in-sentencing” system. Under this system, the sentence received by a violent offender will be significantly enhanced if the offender has a record of any prior juvenile or adult violent offenses.

Note: Under Code of Virginia § 18.2-8, “Offenses are either felonies or misdemeanors. Such offenses as are punishable with death or confinement in a state correctional facility are felonies; all other offenses are misdemeanors.”

***More than three-quarters
of violent offenders convicted
in 1995–1997 had a prior
criminal conviction.
More than one-half had a
prior felony conviction, and
more than one-quarter had a
prior conviction for another
violent felony offense.***
